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December 21, 1954

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE BOARD ASSISTANTS**

**SUBJECT: Prospect of Soviet or East German Harassment of Berlin**

Attached for your information and briefing of the Board members in connection with the meeting of December 22 is a memorandum prepared by the OGB Working Group on Germany relative to the prospect of Soviet or East German harassment of Berlin.

At the OGB luncheon meeting of December 15, it was suggested that the working group be alerted to this general problem from the point of view of anticipating possible Soviet action or reaction in connection with the ratification of the European defense agreements. Subsequently Mr. Tayer and Mr. Lyon agreed that the attached memorandum, prepared by Mr. Lyon after discussion in a meeting of the working group, should be submitted for the information of the Board members and it is transmitted for this purpose. Mr. Lyon requested that it be made clear that the memorandum, in this form, however, has not been checked with the working group.

[Redacted Signature]

**Executive Officer**

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**Attachment:**

By memo to Cecil B. Lyon,  
Group, OGB Wk. Gr. on Germany,  
to EO, OGB, 12/21/54, above subj.

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**OPERATIONS COORDINATING BOARD**  
Washington, D.C.

December 21, 1954

TO:  Executive Officer, OCB

FROM:  OCB Working Group on Germany

SUBJECT: Prospect of Soviet or East German Harassment of Berlin.

The Working Group on Germany wishes to call attention to the possibility of Soviet or East German harassment of Berlin as a consequence of ratification of the Paris agreements or perhaps even during the ratification process. Harassment is considered much more likely after ratification than prior thereto, although Soviet or East German threats or gestures may be expected at any time. One of the probable Soviet reactions in Germany to ratification will be a further effort to build up an East German state. In conjunction with this effort the East Germans will probably be permitted, (or instructed), to harass Berlin and access thereto. Allied protests may well be referred by Soviet officials in a cavalier manner to the East German Government. Possibly they may be prepared to step in to avoid or adjust any especially serious clash which might develop. It is not believed that the Soviets will impose an outright blockade since we do not think they are prepared at this juncture to run the risk of general war. The likelihood is for harassing measures short of an attempt at prolonged but ultimate strangulation.

Although there are an infinite variety of measures which the GDR could take on behalf of the Soviets, the following are among the more probable:

(1) Technical reasons for not approving a large percentage of ~~transit~~ ~~passports~~ (transit papers which are necessary for a large proportion of Berlin's exports). Since August 1953 the GDR has been stamping these papers on behalf of the Soviets. If the GDR refuses to stamp a sufficiently large percentage of transit papers it may become necessary for us to assist the West German Government to augment its commercial airlift to fly out exports. (The Berlin Government has for some time employed commercial aircraft to fly out a considerable number of those items which have low bulk and high value, e.g. textiles, in order to assure prompt delivery). In considering a possible emergency of this kind, the Working Group desires to emphasize that there is no readily available fund which could be drawn upon to institute immediate assistance.

(2) Delay passage of German commercial traffic to Berlin through technicalities such as vigorous inspection of identity documents and goods or through other technical means.

(3) False

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(3) Take measures designed to prevent contact between West Berliners and residents of the Soviet zone; additionally split East Berlin from West Berlin, making the sector border a sort of state frontier. These measures could cause initially an increased influx of refugees into Berlin. A definite splitting of the city would undoubtedly cause some immediate dislocation in employment since about 40,000 Berliners live in one-half of the city and work in the other.

(4) Replace Soviet officials at all check points with GDR personnel. No special problem would arise in this event provided GDR officials confine their activity to checking Allied identity documents and make no attempt to control access. These GDR officials would be viewed by the Allies as agents of the Soviets.

An examination of available reprisals, applicable in Berlin and Eastern Germany, against the types of harassment outlined above, indicates that they are probably insufficient to force cessation. These potential reprisals include interference with Soviet installations, primarily affecting prestige, such as the War Memorial in the British Sector or access to the former radio building in the British Sector which is still used by the Soviets. Other possible reprisals concern suspension of commercial activities or services connected with the Soviet Bloc. Most of them would be difficult to apply without widespread concurrence.

The Allied High Commission has prepared a tripartite agreed report which makes recommendations as to the position which the Allies should adopt toward possible future harassments by East German authorities in the fields of general access to Berlin, travel documentation, commercial relations, protection of foreign interests in East Germany, and participation of East Germany in international organizations. This report, which has been approved by the three governments, indicates that the Allies would have to refuse to submit to actual control of access to Berlin by the GDR, although GDR officials acting as agents of the Soviets would be tolerated up to a point. This tripartite report is helpful in laying down an agreed general guide in the various fields in which the GDR could pose special problems. Precise Allied counter-moves, of course, cannot be rigidly plotted in advance but must be decided in the light of the particular GDR action and all the prevailing circumstances.

In general, the German Working Group does not believe the prospect of harassment is such that major urgent concern is required at this time. The Working Group does believe, however, that a disagreeable and difficult situation in and around East Berlin over an extended period may be inaugurated without ratification, although for the present in our judgment it will not assume the proportions of a full-scale blockade.

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## ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

INSTRUCTIONS: Officer designations should be used in the "TO" column. Under each comment a line should be drawn across the sheet and each comment numbered to correspond with the number in the "TO" column. Each officer should initial (check mark or comment) before further routing. This Routing and Record Sheet should be returned to Registry.

FROM:

O C B

TELEPHONE NO.

DATE

21 Dec 54

| TO          | ROOM NO. | DATE  |       | OFFICER'S INITIALS | TELEPHONE | COMMENTS |
|-------------|----------|-------|-------|--------------------|-----------|----------|
|             |          | REC'D | FWD'D |                    |           |          |
| 1. SA / OCB |          |       |       |                    |           |          |
| 2.          |          |       |       |                    |           |          |
| 3.          |          |       |       |                    |           |          |
| 4.          |          |       |       |                    |           |          |
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| 14.         |          |       |       |                    |           |          |
| 15.         |          |       |       |                    |           |          |

FORM NO. 610

REPLACES FORM 51-10 WHICH MAY BE USED.

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